



CITY OF GAITHERSBURG



CONSTITUTION GARDENS PARK

112 BROOKES AVENUE

2015 Nature Play Space Workshop
Adam Newhart-Project Manager
October 28, 2015

The Nature Play Experience

Agenda

- Navigating project from initiation to completion
- History of Constitution Gardens Park
- Timeline
- Processes (Ad Hoc, RFP, Approvals, Construction)
- Nature Play Elements & Areas of Interest
- Project Collaboration
- Stakeholders
- Safety Audit
- What made this project successful?
- Lessons Learned
- Advice and Takeaways
- Q and A with key staff

Sneek Peek



City of Gaithersburg & Project Background

- Culture of future thinking, teamwork and putting residents #1!
(Kentlands, Organic Infill, Nature Play in City parks)
- Project Budget versus Actual. Guesses? How much money did the City borrow to fund this project?
- Full support and “buy in” of Mayor and Council

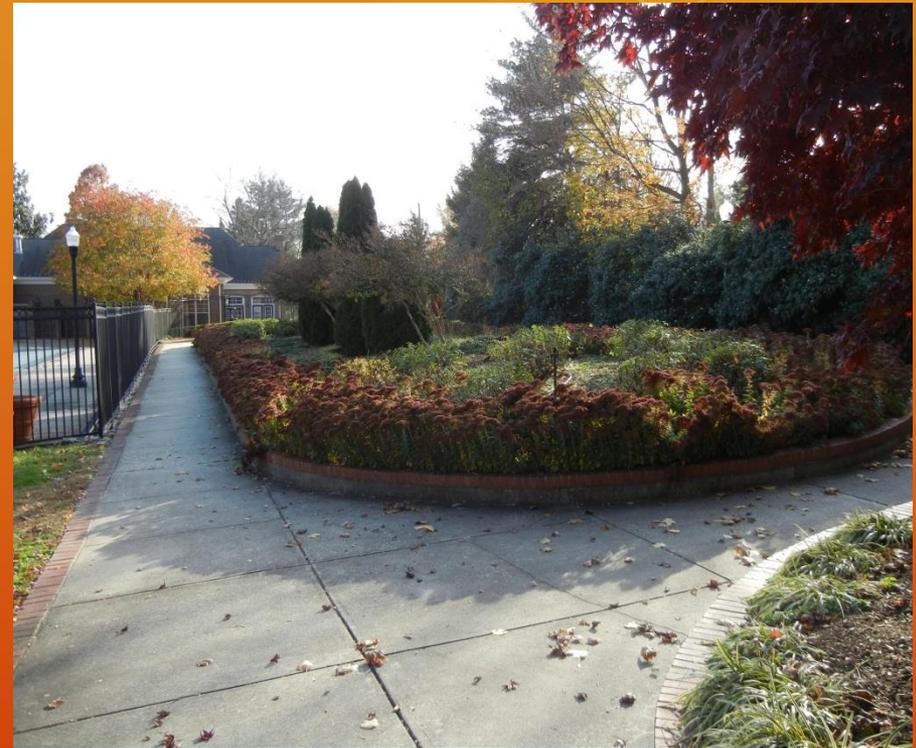


Gaithersburg & CGP Story

- How did this idea come about? Nature Play what??? Why not Plastic nature play?
- Why did the City take on this project?
- More detailed questions regarding construction specifics can be asked during Q and A or on site



What Was Constitution Gardens Before 2012?

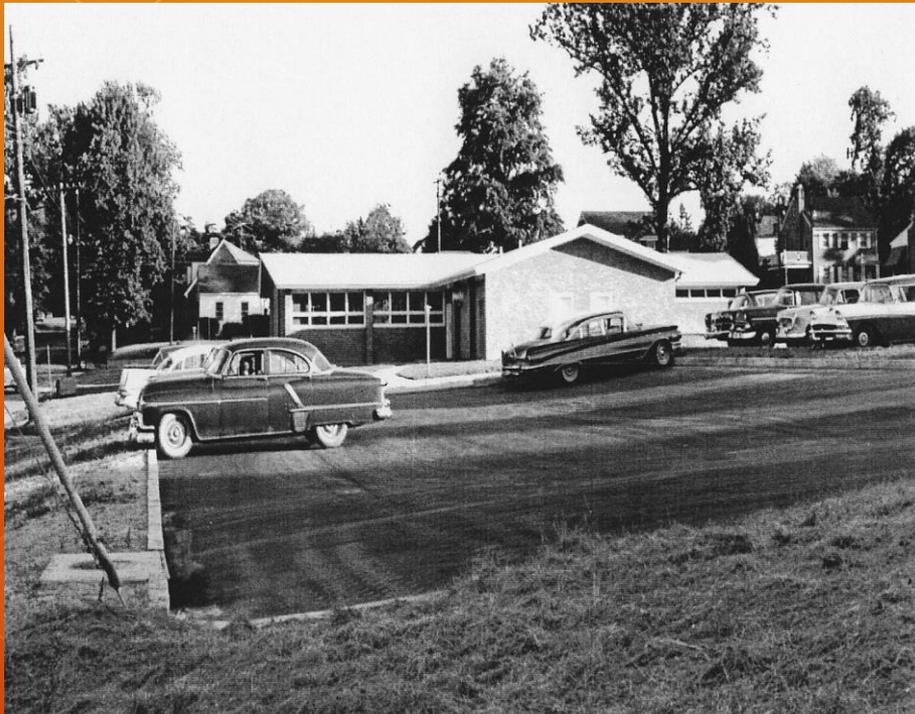


Why did this park need a makeover?
What concerns were there at this space?
What activities could I participate in?

Gaithersburg Library

Photo Credit: Shaun Curtis

1961



1968



Gaithersburg branch of the Montgomery County Public Library on Brookes Avenue

Before



Perspectives



Gazebo



Timeline & Process

- Project Conception - 2012 by Council Member Cathy Drzyzgula to infuse new life into space and area of Old Towne
- Ad Hoc Committee established November 2012 and started meeting in January 2013
- Concept presented to Mayor & Council by Ad-Hoc to “sell the vision” May 2013
- Met six times over 3 months

Ad-Hoc Process



Committee Charge Four Main Points

- Review existing conditions of the site
- Identify commemorative plantings that may need to be restored or relocated if necessary
- Review information gathered by staff through outreach to original donor base
- Gather input on potential improvements/modifications to the site and provide recommendations to M & CC
- *Staff, Residents, Council, Police (various backgrounds) CPTED*
- *Worked with an Landscape Architect to develop initial concept rendering*

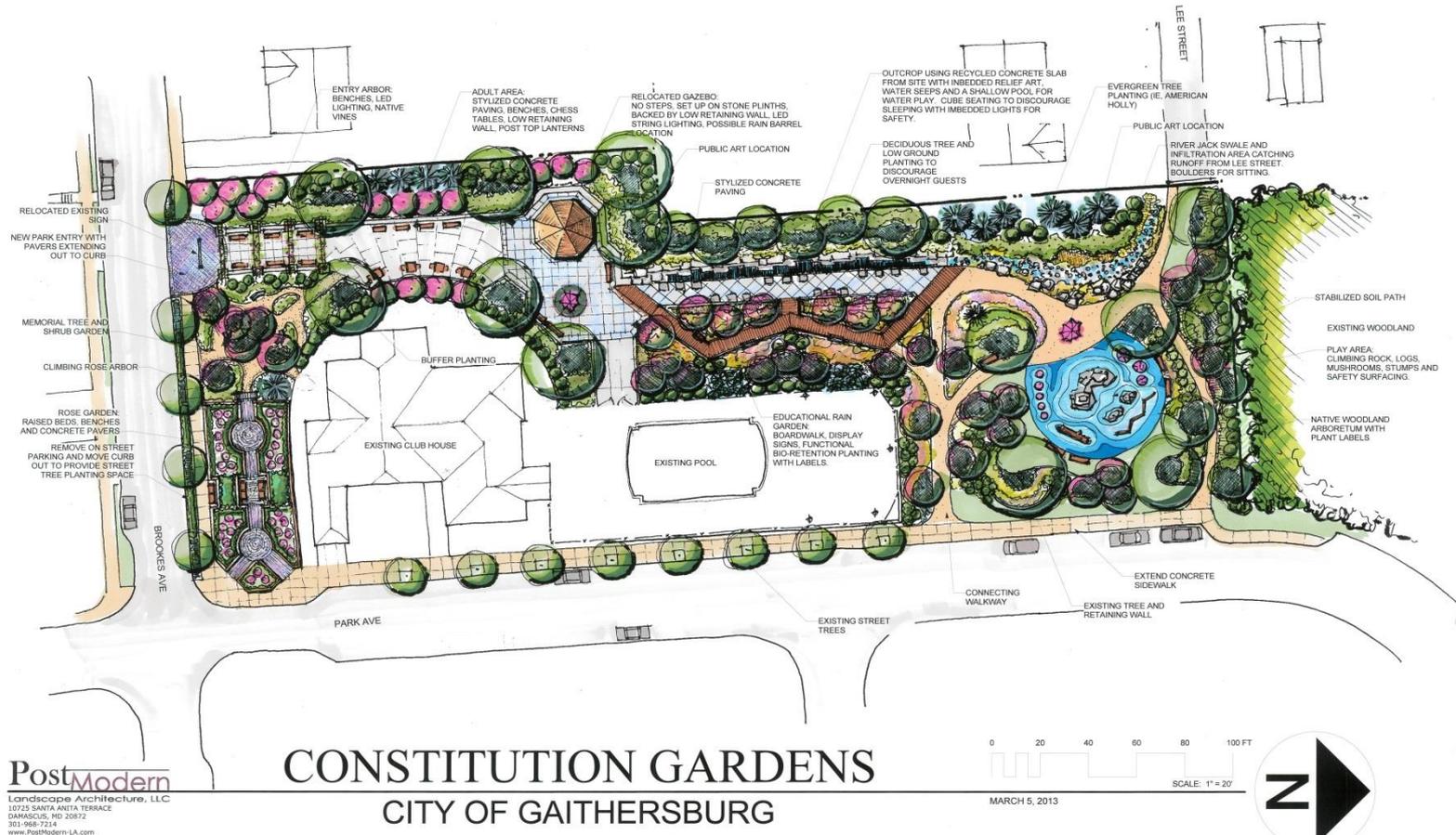


Project Goals

- Park that incorporates the past and present, and educates the future
- Sustainable amenities to emphasize Horticulture & Environment
- Attractive and inviting features for all ages that make the park active
- Safe, Secure & Inviting



Developing a Vision and Starting Point



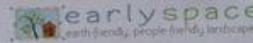
Elements of this design became...

Overall Plan

...What you see today!

Learn More at gaithersburgmd.gov

Constitution Gardens
City of Gaithersburg



Timeline and Process Continued

- RFP process began in 2014 Design/Build (3 bidders total)
- Project Awarded to The Seneca Creek Collaborative – Team of experts in their respective field after a thorough technical proposal and interview process
 - (J and G Landscape Design, Inc., Natural Resource Design, Early Space, LLC, Civil & Environmental Services)
- Mandatory pre-bid meeting
- Contract Award August 2014
- Permitting
- Groundbreaking (City staff first then contractors) fall 2014
- Completion & Dedication September 2015

“Constitution Gardens Park celebrates the past, present and future of Gaithersburg with unique interactive play spaces that have been inspired by the cultural, economic and natural history of the area.”



Featured Elements at CGP



Bird's Nest Hill



Insect Hotel



Lost Library



Horticultural Hill



Log Town – Commemorates 250th



Meet Wooley, Penelope and Bella



Sliding Hill



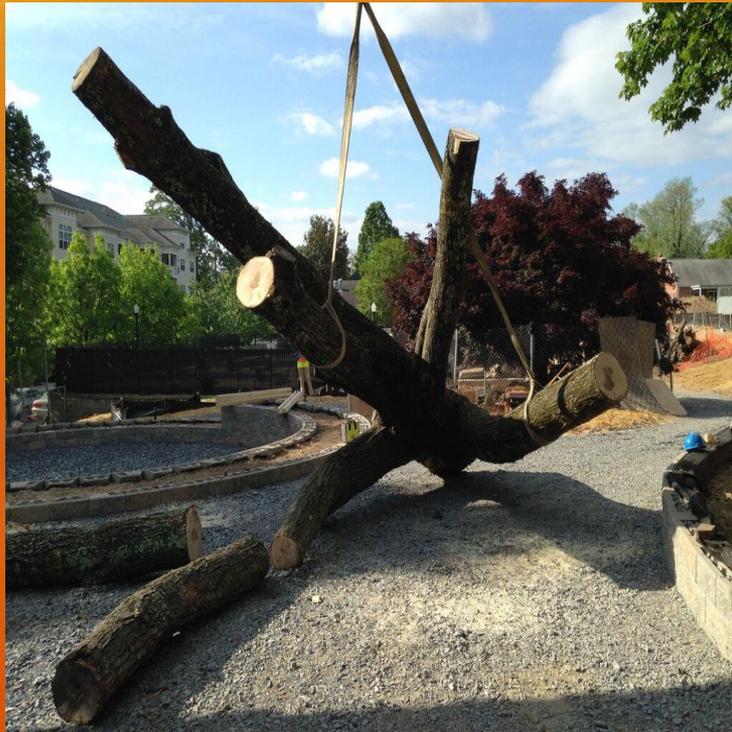
Rain Gardens



Fallen Log



Fallen Log



Boulders of All Shapes and Sizes



Great Seneca Creek



Importance of Collaboration to Overall Success



Collaboration



Collaboration



Project Stakeholders

- City Residents
- CMO, PR&C, PW, Police, Planning Department's
- **Adjoining Neighbors** and Business' Involved Early
- Bill Botten, ADA specialist
- Nature Play Space Auditor/CPSI
- PEPCO
- Planning Commission
- Seneca Creek Collaborative

Safety Audit

- Performed by Teri Hendy of Site Masters Inc.
- The ASTM F1487-11 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use was used as a basis for the audit.
- The CPSC Handbook for Public Playground Safety was also used and referenced in the audit.



Audit

- The purpose of this audit was to identify existing non-compliant conditions and to advise regarding hazard identification “best practices” regarding the natural play areas.
- The natural play equipment was evaluated using a hazard analysis process based upon the hazards identified in the ASTM Standard and the CPSC Handbook.
- Potential litigation issues?
- Same as other playgrounds/gross negligence





Keys to Project Success

- Communication (written, verbal, reg. on-site meetings)
- Involvement of City and Non City Stakeholders
- Vision to sell the project
- In house staffing. (Utilize in house talent)
- Business/Residents adjacent properties
- Professionalism and Detailed Approach by SCC drawing on their areas of expertise
- Have fun and appreciate the ride!
- Under promise over deliver mentality. Exceeding project expectations

Lessons Learned

- Budget high...then budget higher
- Start construction in the fall
- Engineered plans and design in lieu of design/build approach
- Understand maintenance costs
- Mandate soil borings on all future projects
- Set dedication date as project is close to completion

Advice and Takeaways

- Communication
- Get project buy-in, internal and external
- Identify all project stakeholders early
- Define detailed project scope. Avoid scope creep.
- Schedule a spring construction start date
- Budget for the project...budget for the yearly and future maintenance. Weekly maintenance also be considered. Time, materials and labor.
- Utilize in house staff if permissible (thank you SCC)
- Promote your project/take the positive media
- Time Lapse Camera? Yes, several please!
- Would we do it all over again? Yes, smaller scale.
- When will the next Nature Play Space be constructed in Gaithersburg?

The Reward 😊



Visitors in Action



A Mission Fulfilled



Questions?



Additional Resources

Mark Scafide - Public Works Operations Division Chief

301-258-6370

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Charles Reed – Parks Supervisor

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Trudy Schwarz – Community Planning Manager

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Michele Potter – Parks, Recreation & Culture Director

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Thank You!

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Additional Resources:

www.gaitthersburgmd.gov

Newsline:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3GPyRyp_j0&list=PLixQH3optnavCNN2_71XmpzEltQ3menR6

Television Broadcast:

<http://wjla.com/features/good-morning-washington/constitution-gardens-park>